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Finding a Path Forward

ASIAN AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS THEME STUDY

Edited by Franklin Odo

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Essay 5

Establishing Communities, 1848-1941

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The 19th and 20th century imperial wars, conquest, and the expansion of market capitalism in Asia displaced millions of people and created opportunities for large scale migration from China, Japan, India, Korea, and the Philippines. In the first half of the 19th century, a number of factors profoundly impacted the livelihood, land arrangements, trade, and everyday lives of inhabitants who survived a number of catastrophic events. These included the British conquest of India, the British Opium Wars and defeat of the Chinese empire, the implementation of port treaties and trade concessions, and the U.S. forcible trade agreements with Japan. By the late 19th century, they also endured the Japanese empire's competition with Russia and China over the Korean peninsula and Manchuria and the U.S. assumption of control of the Philippines from Spain and bloody war of invasion and suppression of the Philippine independence movement. In

The Nishimura family and friends on their farm in Seattle, Washington, 1936. Left to right: Kumataro Nishimura, Kadju Nishimura, Emily Herold holding Mary Nakashige, Peggie Yorita, Patsy Yorita, Tom Nishimura, Jiro Matsumura, Harry Oki (behind Matsumura), Hanni Nishimura, and Alex Ando. Photo courtesy of Densho Archive, Bain Family Collection.

addition, the demands of industrialization centered in Europe, the U.S. and Japan intensified demands for large-scale resource extraction, plantation cultivation, infrastructure development, and the intense demand for large numbers of laborers.

Similar in size and scale to mid-19th to mid-20th century global migration streams from Europe, the Middle East, and Russia, historians have estimated that more than 52 million people from India, coastal China, and Northeastern Asia migrated across the globe. The development of steamship and railroad travel accelerated the pace and numbers of people migrating away from their birthplace. More than 90 percent of these migrants from China and South Asia migrated as laborers to British and French plantations in South and Southeast Asia, as well as plantations in the Caribbean islands and the Pacific basin. Approximately 2 million Chinese, South Asian, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino migrants journeyed to North America.[1] Although there are prior documented migrations of Asian sailors, merchants, and laborers to the Americas, the large-scale migrations from 1848 to the onset of World War II had a much more substantial impact on establishing Asian immigrant communities and populating Hawai'i, the Western United States, and locations across the maritime east coast and Midwest.

This essay focuses on the development of communities and the waves of expansion, contraction, and transformation they experienced during this period. Asian community development will be explored in five ways: first, the development of migration networks that shaped the flows of movement; second, the establishment and development of social, mutual aid, and spiritual institutions that sheltered and supported community-building, advanced community networks, and formed the basis for adaptation and resilience in new environments; third, the Asian American impact in transforming the physical landscape by their activities in building roads and railways, agricultural and viniculture development, resource extraction, and fisheries, as well as introducing new kinds of plants and tending to and shaping gardens; fourth, the emergence of civic and political associations, which included civil rights and advocacy groups, labor unions, and nationalist political organizations; and fifth, the development of commercial and entertainment cultures that sheltered leisure and social activities and provided the grounds for inter-ethnic associations. These leisure and entertainment businesses included restaurants and cafes, opium dens, and gambling houses. Taxi-dance halls, social venues where men could pay to dance with young partners, usually per dance number, for example, were spaces of interracial and interclass mingling. In addition, Asian entrepreneurs toured Chinese opera troupes, film exhibition cultures, and American touristic entertainment.

MIGRATION NETWORKS

New research in migration history and sociology has focused attention on the networks and factors that accounted for the sources, direction, and flow of migration from very specific regions and villages to regions across the globe. Business, family, and kin networks were vital for people to sustain migration. Without information, assistance and opportunities from friends and relatives, and credit, employment, and housing resources from trading networks, it would be too risky and expensive to sustain migration streams. The strength of these networks and the channeling of travel, information, funds, and opportunities explain why specific villages and small micro-regions in China, Japan, India, and Philippines accounted for the majority of international migrants to North America. These networks shaped the streams of migration in the periods of their largest flows: for the Chinese in the 1850s to 1870s; for the Japanese in the 1880s to 1920s; for Koreans, 1900 to 1910; for South Asians, 1900 to 1910s; and for Filipinos in the 1910s to 1920s. These networks also helped shape the stream of later migration periods, as nativist Americans negotiated more restrictive immigration policies.

These ethnic business and kin networks assisted migrants through credit and information to secure travel, employment, and housing in Hawai'i and the continental United States. From the 1850s to the 1910s, Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian immigrants were employed in work gangs in infrastructure construction—railroads across the Western United States, as well as Texas, Alabama, and Tennessee. Chinese and Japanese workers worked on reclamation projects to build levees and irrigation and drainage systems, primarily in California, but also in the Southwest. In the same period and continuing into the mid-20th century, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, South Asian, and Filipinos were recruited

to work on sugar plantations in Hawai'i and for a short period in 1869 to 1870 on cotton and sugar plantations in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana. They planted and harvested fruits, vegetables, grains, and cotton in California and across the western United States. They also worked in salmon and tuna canneries and in coal mining and timber processing. They worked in manufacturing shoes, cigars, clothes, and other consumer products. They peddled and traded goods and food and established businesses like laundries, grocery and drug stores, and restaurants. They worked alongside European immigrants, Native Americans, African Americans, Native-born whites, and Mexicans and Chicanos.

In the wake of changes in government regulation, legal rights, and territorial boundaries that influenced migration flows, family and business networks reckoned with potential barriers and leveraged new sources of opportunity by navigating multiple regulatory regimes and migration obstacles and harnessing their skills to make a living. For instance, The Chinese Exclusion Law in 1882 and subsequent legislation prohibited the immigration of laborers and tightened their circular migration patterns. Immigration exclusion laws, identity registration, and immigrant interrogations encouraged Chinese residents to settle. The laws favored the immigration of merchants, students, and the wives and children of U.S. born citizens, and Chinese men, women, and children continued to immigrate to the United States in the first decades of the 20th century. Both formal and informal immigration regulations also favored the entry of Japanese and South Asian merchant class and student immigrants over unskilled or semi-skilled laborers.[2] Throughout the late 19th and early 20th century, mob-violence in rural and urban locations across the western United States caused Asian workers to flee to urban enclaves where there were concentrations of migrants, relative safety, and opportunity.[3]

In the first two decades of the 20th century, the majority of Filipino migration to the United States was directly related to the conquest and colonial administration of the Philippines, for example, through training programs for teachers, nurses, and administrators in the United States. Filipino laborers were also recruited to work in the sugar plantations in Hawai'i. Both flows of

Worker housing south of Locke, California, near the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks. Locke was settled by Chinese immigrants; many worked on the railroad or in agriculture. HABS photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

View from dock of Keku Canning Company in Kake, Alaska: former office, stores, and cooling building. The complex was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1997. HAER photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

migration combined in the 1920s to encourage Filipino migrants to work as farm laborers, as well as domestic and hospitality workers on the U.S. mainland, with concentrations in Washington State and California. Within this larger migration, there were instances of black and white U.S. soldiers marrying Filipino women and living with them and their children on U.S. military bases. Some of them returned from duty tours in the Philippines and returned to civilian life in the United States.[4]

The British and American transoceanic steamship industry depended on Chinese, South Asian, and Filipino laborers. In the 19th century, Chinese sailors worked on American and British ships.[5] In the early 20th century, Filipino sailors labored on the U.S. merchant marine fleet, and in the first half of the 20th century, Filipino sailors in the merchant marine jumped ship at west coast ports. In addition, South Asian sailors, primarily Bengali Muslim youth and men, as well as some Arab sailors, worked on ships for the British Empire. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, South Asian and Chinese sailors often jumped ship and stayed for a time in east coast ports, as they did in Britain and in Europe. On the Pacific Coast, Filipino sailors became part of the stream of transient labor in Alaska salmon canneries, before moving to be field workers to the interior Northwest and California.[6] On the east coast, South Asian and Arab sailors used their skills as firemen on coal-fired steam ships into working boiler rooms of large apartment buildings and offices in coastal cities such as New York, Boston, and Baltimore. Some traveled by rail to the large steel mills in Lackawanna, New York, and manufacturing industries in Detroit, Michigan, and Toledo, Ohio. Some of the South Asian sailors, along with other Arab, Syrian, and Lebanese migrants, in Southern ports, such as Savannah, Jacksonville and New Orleans, worked as peddlers and merchants in the regional south.[7]

SOCIAL, MUTUAL AID AND SPIRITUAL INSTITUTIONS

The development and resilience of Asian communities shaped how family and business networks responded to employer labor demands and negotiated jobs, wages, and housing for migrant workers in the U.S. West. In the second half of the 19th century and the first several decades of the 20th century, speculative invest-

ments in rail transportation, irrigation, electricity, and communication infrastructure in the U.S. West made viable large-scale agricultural production, packing and distribution, seafood harvesting and canning, timber harvesting and processing, and mining for national and international markets. The extraction and harvesting economy necessitated the labor of thousands of migrant laborers from across the continent and the globe. That labor pool moved from agricultural fieldwork to fishing and canneries, timber camps, and mines. Demands for a flexible, seasonal, transient labor force required the management skills of labor contractors who recruited, transported, housed, and often supervised workers hired by farms, canneries, and processing and packing plants. On ranches and camps, itinerant work gangs, individual laborers and families often found temporary housing in bunkhouses, tents, barns, and freestanding houses on or near the properties of their employers. Labor contractors emerged from the ranks of migrant work gangs of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Mexican, Portuguese, Greek, and South Asian workers. Successful labor contractors would disassociate from a particular work gang and hire short-term pick up crews, who sometimes shared ethnic, religious, and linguistic ties but just as often supervised work teams with a range of ethnic and religious backgrounds.

View of Kake, Alaska, looking north. HAER photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

The headquarters of the Chinese Six Companies in San Francisco. The organization was established in 1854 by six associations that conducted business with non-Chinese, and was long recognized as the representative organization of the overseas Chinese in the United States. It was later named the Chinese Association and still later the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, the name which it registered with the state of California in 1930. Photo by Jiang, 2006; courtesy of the Wikimedia Commons.

Over time, informal kin and business networks became formal, corporate associations, businesses, and institutions. Asian immigrants relied upon the establishment of immigrant mutual aid organizations that provided social and financial support to immigrants who shared village, dialect, religion, and occupational identities. Chinese associations (called *huiguan*) were made up of people from the same districts in Guangdong province; these were important community organizations that became established in Chinese immigrant communities. Beginning in 1851 in San Francisco, two huiguan were established: the Sanyi Huiguan (Sam Yup Association) and the Siyi Huiguan (Sze Yup Association). In 1862, the huiguan banded together to create a U.S. national organization, comprised of elected representatives from each huiguan, to arbitrate disagreements between individuals and companies, fight discriminatory laws, hire legal counsel to protect Chinese immigrants, and organize celebrations and other public events in the Chinese American community.

In 1870 in St. Malo, Louisiana, Filipino immigrants founded the first Filipino social club called Sociedad de Beneficencia de los Hispano Filipinos to provide relief and support for the group's members, including the purchasing of burial places for their deceased. In the

Chinese fishing village, c.1907, Monterey, California. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

1920s, Filipinos developed fraternal organizations such as the Dimas Alan, Legionarios del Trabajo, and Gran Oriente Filipino. The Filipino Federation of America, founded in 1925, advocated high moral standards and respect for U.S. constitutional law among its members; in Hawai'i, they opposed the unionization of Filipino plantation laborers.[8]

Mutual aid organizations and cooperatives enabled Japanese immigrants to lease and sharecrop land for the production of vegetables, berries, fruits, and rice in California, Oregon, Washington, Oregon, Utah, Arizona, and Colorado. Cooperatives developed to connect Japanese farmers with Japanese and Chinese urban businessmen for labor supplies and capital as well as for distribution networks to sell produce in towns and cities. In particular, Japanese cultivators and contractors established numerous local agricultural cooperatives, agricultural associations, and farm labor contractors' organizations. These associations enabled Japanese immigrants to gain vertical control over production, distribution, and retailing of agricultural produce. They were able to broker and share resources and information, buy supplies in bulk, and assist newcomers in various aspects of the production, distribution, processing, and retailing processes. The agricultural associations also served many valuable community support functions by holding annual picnics, supporting festivals and fairs, awarding scholarships, and establishing youth and women's groups.[9]

In 1918, the Hindustani Welfare and Reform Society was founded in California's Imperial Valley for the mutual aid and assistance to Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim immigrants. A number of South Asian men who had tenancy partnerships married Mexican Catholic women. In some traditions, such as Catholic baptism and confirmation, the ritual ties between godparents and children became redrafted and reinforced in the migration process, creating innovative, dense webs of emotional and economic sustenance among male migrants. This added new layers of ties that helped networks adapt and navigate economic opportunities and strengthen social ties.[10]

Over time many of these specific business and family networks gave support to more U.S. based non-profit religious and social welfare organizations. In the 20th century, Chinese residents, particularly in large cities, created a range of social welfare organizations to meet the needs of their communities. These included Chinese language schools, Chinese YWCA and YMCA groups, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce as well as Chinese hospitals, clinics, and dispensaries. Japanese residents established the Japanese Association of America with branches across the U.S., and they developed a range of language schools, Japanese YMCAs and Japanese YWCAs, and a variety of trade associations for shoemakers, art goods, cloth dying, dry goods stores, grocers, laundrymen, barbers, bathhouse operators, restaurant owners, and doctors, which made it possible for Japanese Chambers of Commerce to develop in major population centers.[11]

Colonialism, global communications, industrialization, and international migration exerted tremendous pressure on the forms, teaching, and institutions of spiritual practice in many regions of Asia. Religious revivals, institutions, and communication practices enabled the flourishing of new sects as well as the sharpening of distinctions among faith traditions. Older religions like Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, and Christianity witnessed increased demands for internal coherence and orthodoxy on the one hand and the rise of heterogeneous, hybrid, spiritual practices, and organizations on the other. Asian immigrants built traditional temples but adapted their spiritual practices and organization in new contexts, establishing rituals, festivals, and events that organized the calendar and spaces in their immediate environments. Since many of these faith traditions practiced a lunar calendar and oriented their ritual practices to both seasons and the

physical landscape, they adaptively reoriented both to their locations and to the European Christian church's physical and ritual structures. Spiritual and religious organizations formed social centers and ritual communities for Asian immigrants. The Chinese established Taoist temples and altars as well as Buddhist temples in the new towns they inhabited. These traditional Chinese temples and altar buildings, frequently referred to in English as "Joss Houses," served individual worship and provided community rituals for the spirits of departed relatives. Often community members served as deacons and caretakers of the temples because ordained priests were not usually available.

Buddhist religious practice first appeared in some of the early Chinese temples built in the 1850s. The first Japanese Buddhist temple, in Paauhau, Hawai'i, was built in 1896, and a Japanese Buddhist temple was built in San Francisco in 1899. At the turn of the century, Japanese Buddhist missionaries and immigrants established a Young Men's Buddhist Association. Buddhist temples spread across the United States. Soyen Shaku, the first Zen Buddhist master to teach in the United States, spoke at the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893 and lectured in Chicago and California. His students followed and established Zen meditation centers and sitting halls across the United States in the early 20th century. In 1931, the Buddhist Society of America was established.[12]

The famous Hindu teacher, Swami Vivekananda also spoke at the World Parliament of Religions and established, in 1893, the Hindu Vedanta Society in New York, "designed to attract American adherents." On a subsequent trip Vivekananda established the Vedanta Society in Northern California. The Vedanta Society built the first Hindu temple in the U.S., in San Francisco, in 1906; others followed, including the Hollywood Temple in 1938. Other Hindu teachers from India followed and established institutions primarily to teach Hinduism to Americans in Boston, New York, Chicago, and California.[13]

In 1912, Sikh immigrants established the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society. They used homes, as well as outdoor grounds and rented halls for their services throughout Pacific Coast settlements. In North America, Sikh temples or Gurdwara were first established in Canada in Victoria, British Columbia. Shortly after the founding of the Khalsa Diwan Society, the first outdoor services occurred in 1915 in Stockton on property that housed the first Sikh temple in the United States. In addition to ritual, devotional, and musical practice, the Gurdwara has a langar, or community kitchen attached, where free vegetarian food is served without consideration of caste, creed, or religion. Hindu and Muslim immigrants, as well as residents of different ethnic and faith communities, also participated in the services and activities of the Gurdwara.

In 1920, Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, an Indian Ahmadi Muslim missionary, went to Philadelphia and proselytized among immigrants and African Americans in the Northeast. His converts built mosques in Detroit in 1921 and Chicago in 1922; they are the oldest standing mosques in the United States. Although their missionary efforts ranged broadly among a range of racial and ethnic groups, including Balkan and Turkish Syrian immigrants, subsequent realization of the deep-seated racial tensions and discrimination made Ahmadi Muslim missionaries focus their attention primarily on African Americans. Afghani and Punjabi immigrants in California practiced their faith in homes or rented halls and built mosques in El Centro and Sacramento, California, after the 1940s.[14]

Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist Christian missions, churches, schools, and orphanages also served Chinese, Japanese, and Korean communities. These Protestant Christian churches created ethnically segregated educational and welfare institutions that were domestic outposts to their foreign mission operations in China, Japan, and Korea. Reverend Shigefusa Kanda established the first school in Kohala, Hawai'i, in 1893, and others soon followed, including several attached to Hawaiian Hongwanji missions. On the mainland, the first Japanese language schools were established in the early 1900s; subsequent schools were established throughout California and the western United States. The schools in Hawai'i were accused of having direct links to Japan and supporting labor strikes, including the 1909 and 1920 strikes against the sugar plantations. These confrontations exposed fault lines of religion and class within the Japanese American community. Since Buddhist organizations were heavily involved in the establishment of schools, many Japanese American Christian churches founded their own competing schools that favored rapid assimilation.

The Stockton, California, Sikh Temple, c.1920. Photo courtesy of the Holt-Atherton Special Collections, University of the Pacific Library, P80-138.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE

The labor and cultivation techniques employed by Chinese and Japanese workers transformed the physical landscape of the western United States. In the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Chinese immigrants built many of the roads, railways, and wooden flumes that carried water in a gravity flow system to the gold mining districts in the 1850s. In the Sierra Nevada Foothills in Mariposa, Tuolumne, Stanislaus, and Calaveras counties, there is evidence of stonewalls crafted by Chinese workers in the mid-19th century. These stone fences and corrals for livestock were built in response to problems of containing livestock. With the scarcity of wood and barbed wire, Chinese workers cleared uncut field stones from the surrounding land for pasture or farming and skillfully constructed walls, without mortar, on rolling hills. In addition, they remade the physical landscape by employing Chinese building and ranching techniques. One of the ancient building techniques brought from China was construction using rammed earth. While adobe and rammed earth are often associated with Spanish and Mexican cultures, rammed earth was a construction technique in use in China as early as 1500 B.C. This technique involves packing mud between wooden forms and hammering it until it becomes as hard as stone.[15]

Trestle at the Sweet Mine, Coal City, Carbon County, Utah, 1968. The mine is significant as the first mine in Utah where the majority of the initial miners were Japanese. HAER photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

As mining became less profitable, Chinese workers left the gold fields in the 1850s and 1860s to drain swamps and build levees to prevent flooding and bring more land into agricultural production in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys. They constructed large networks of earthen levees that eventually turned 500,000 acres of swamp into some of California's most valuable farmland. The reclaimed land was able to support large farms and the expansion of the sugar beet, pear, and asparagus industries that demanded manual laborers to plant and harvest crops. Many of the Chinese workers stayed in the area and made a living as farm workers and sharecroppers. In the 1850s through the turn of the 20th century, Chinese and Japanese laborers drained swamps and terraced and irrigated farmland. They used techniques developed in South China and coastal Japan as cultivation techniques to increase the productivity of marginal farmland.[16]

Worker housing was built by employers and also creatively adapted and used by Asian workers on Hawaiian plantations, mainland farms, and mines and in small towns and cities. Culturally specific items include architectural woodcarvings; kitchen utensils; pottery and cooking methods; the fruit, flower, and vegetables in the kitchen gardens; and bathing facilities. These are all evident in the ruins of bunkhouses, apartments, and other habitations. There are examples of culturally specific, adaptive use now uncovered in abandoned housing in farming, timber harvesting, and railroad construction sites across the western United States. Workers' houses have been restored in places like Locke, California.

CIVIC AND POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS

With the establishment of specific Asian communities in the United States and the challenges that the family and business networks faced in protecting the rights and interests of Asian immigrant groups, a generation of English-educated leaders created new institutions that mirrored both ethnic European and black organizations. They were also inspired by nationalists organizing in their native lands. They built organizations that could advocate for political, economic, and social interests as well as develop an institutional base for expressing identity and community for Chinese, Japanese, Korean, South Asian, and Filipino groups.

The primary civic and political organization for Chinese immigrants was the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. The association provided legal assistance, advocacy, and assistance to Chinese immigrants facing discriminatory local and national laws and regulations. A Chinese "Native Sons of the Golden State" came into existence in San Francisco in 1895. By 1915, it was renamed the Chinese American Citizens Alliance to reflect its national reach. By the 1920s the organization developed branches in San Antonio, Houston, Albuquerque, Tucson, Phoenix, Sunnyvale, Washington D.C., New York, and Sacramento. In the wake of discriminatory municipal regulations in New York in the 1930s and the reluctance of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association to advocate on their behalf, the Chinese laundrymen created the Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance. It hired attorneys to effectively lobby city officials. It also raised public awareness of the Japanese invasion of China and sent support for humanitarian purposes.[17]

Korean immigrant organizations developed to respond to the Japanese imperial control over Korea in 1910. Ahn Chang-ho established the Friendship Society

Farmers field day in Truk District, Federated States of Micronesia, 1979. Photo N-2991.03, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands Archives; courtesy of the University Archives & Manuscripts Department, University of Hawaii at Manoa Library.

in San Francisco in 1903 and the Young Korea Academy in 1913. Young-man Pak established military training academies for the independence struggle, first with the establishment of the Korean Youth Military Academy in Nebraska in 1909 and then opened four other academies in California, Wyoming, and Kansas City. He consolidated the efforts for developing a fighting force with the establishment of the Korean National Brigade in Hawai'i in 1912. After the Japanese colonial government violently suppressed the peaceful Korean March for self-determination on March 1, 1919, Maria Hwang organized the Korean Women's Relief Society. It boycotted Japanese goods and sent funds to the Korean independence movement. Both institutions were revived in the wake of the Japanese invasions of Manchuria and China in the 1930s. The Korean Women's Patriotic Society was founded in California to unite all Korean women's organizations in North America. Syngman Rhee formed the Comrade Society in 1921 and established a separate Korean Christian Church. In the 1920s, he lobbied and fundraised in the U.S. and became the first president of independent Korea after World War II.[18]

The struggle for freedom from British rule led to the organization of the Indian Independence League in Portland, Oregon, in 1908 by South Asian students. Many of these students, including Har Dayal and Tarak Nath Das, subsequently founded the Pacific Coast Hindustan Association, which was subsequently called the Ghadar Party in San Francisco. The party quickly gained support from Indian expatriates and held meetings and created chapters in the United States, Canada, Latin America, and Asia.

Ghadar's ultimate goal was to overthrow British colonial authority in India by means of an armed revolution and to entice the Indian soldiers in the British Empire to revolt. In November 1913, Ghadar established the Yugantar Ashram press in San Francisco. The press produced the Hindustan Ghadar newspaper and other nationalist literature. In New York, Lala Lajpat Rai established the India Home Rule League, which advocated "home rule" for India, and they produced a monthly journal entitled "Young India". Another similar and critical organization was Friends of Freedom for India.[19]

COMMERCIAL AND ENTERTAINMENT CULTURES

In U.S. towns and cities, businesses developed that contributed to the economic and social circulation of migrants and participated in broader transnational spheres of ethnic cultural influences. Ethnic coffeehouses, saloons, grocery stores, and boardinghouses emerged in the urban transit zones. They provided places for Greeks, Mexicans, Japanese, South Asians, and Syrians to experience comforting entertainment and food, receive mail and news from home, provide an arena to discuss opportunities and jobs, and share grievances, information, and survival skills.

Japanese bathhouses were established in Seattle, Santa Barbara, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, as well as in smaller towns in the Sacramento Delta. These institutions were an important fixture in Japanese American communities from the 1910s until the beginning of WWII. In Rancho Palos Verdes, two Japanese brothers harnessed the sulfur hot springs and built the White Point Hot Spring Resort on the shores of the Pacific in 1917.[20]

Pool halls, saloons, vaudeville theaters, cinemas, opium dens, gambling halls, coffee shops, cafes, and restaurants also encouraged the mingling of different ethnic groups of males and some women. The rise of early 20th century commercial amusements enabled new practices of courtship, dating, negotiation of sexual mores, and social practices among men and women of different races and classes. Moral reformers, police, and anti-vice societies paid particular attention to the public activities of adult women and male and female youth. A great deal of the history of these institutions is understood in relationship to municipal policing of suspected illicit social and sexual activity resulting in arrests for soliciting prostitution, public drunkenness, narcotics and alcohol consumption, public disturbance, and physical assault. Police were particularly attentive to the potential for interracial sexual and social dynamics in taxi dance halls as well as on the streets.[21]

Chinese and Japanese art forms also circulated internationally in transnational circuits of cultural influence that followed closely on ethnic migration networks. For example, traveling Chinese opera troupes circulated not only regionally in China but also followed migration routes in Southeast Asia, North America, the Caribbean, and South America. From the late 19th century through the mid-20th century, Cantonese opera troupes per-

formed throughout the United States. In 19th century San Francisco, several Chinese opera theaters operated on Jackson Street, including Hing Chuen Yuen (Royal Chinese Theater), Luk Suhn Fung company (Oriental Academy of Music), and Lon Sun Fung (Peacock Theater). Two Chinese Theaters were established on Doyer Street in New York City in the last two decades of the 19th century.

These travelling opera troupes created a lively circuit of performances across the western U.S., in Midwest and Northeast cities, as well as in Cuba and Canada. Once the Chinese exclusion regulations exempted Chinese opera entertainers in the 1910s, a lively touring circuit was developed, including both Canada and Cuba. In San Francisco in the 1920s, the Mandarin Theater and the Great China Theater opened their doors. New York City had several competing theaters, while the Kue Hing Company Theater set up in Honolulu and provided a popular stopping point for trans-Pacific touring troupes. Chinese theaters began to appear in Boston, Chicago, Portland, Seattle, and Los Angeles. During the vibrant renaissance of the 1920s to 1940s, these venues became important arenas for the performance of Chinese myths and cultural beliefs, historical and fictional figures, and epic stories and folklore. In the 1930s, with the widespread availability of radio and movies, Chinese theaters began to decline as new entertainment media like radio and movies provided strong competition.

Japanese and Chinese proprietors leased theaters and created impromptu tent theaters on Hawaiian plantations and agricultural fields to exhibit Chinese, Japanese, and American films from the 1910s to the 1940s. Japanese proprietors hired *benshi*, Japanese performers who provided live narration for silent films. Asians, blacks, and Latinos often watched movies on segregated balconies, known as the "peanut galleries" (or worse), separated by walls and curtains from white patrons. In some theaters, "special" and separate back doors and refreshment areas accompanied the often times higher priced movie tickets for people of color. Japanese Americans in Los Angeles's Little Tokyo built and patronized their own theaters, which included the International Theater, built in 1907. It featured both Japanese and American films. The Toyo-za theater and Fuji-kan theater followed, offering mostly Japanese-made films to Japanese American audiences living in and around Los Angeles. The theaters drew urban audiences living in the city but also attracted Japanese living and working in outlying farms outside the city. These theaters also served Filipino, Mexican, and European immigrant workers.

In 1909, the Nippon Kan (Japanese Hall) Theater opened in Seattle's International District. The Nippon Kan served as the cultural center of the Japanese community. It was busy several nights a week with actors and musicians from Japan and included kabuki, movies, concerts, variety shows, judo and kendo competitions, and community meetings. The Kokusai Theater in the Seattle International District was opened by *benshi* who had begun screening and narrating silent films in Buddhist temples and Christian churches.[22]

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Chinese restaurants and nightclubs put on all-Asian revues for predominantly white audiences. Singers, tap dancers, acrobats, fan dancers, and musicians performed nightly at the China Doll in New York and at clubs such as the Shangri-la, Kubla Khan, Chinese Sky Room, and Forbidden City in San Francisco. Performers who made the rounds at these clubs referred to them collectively as the "Chop Suey Circuit," an allusion to other vaudeville circuits such as the Orpheum, Loews, and "Chitlin'" Circuits. The Chop Suey Circuit clubs, billed as "all-Chinese" variety shows, featured performers who were mostly American-born Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino.[23]

CONCLUSION

The emergence of Asian immigrant communities in Hawai'i and the mainland United States was shaped by dislocations resulting from competing imperial wars, as well as trade and settlement. Migration networks shaped not only the flow and direction of population movements but also the development of social, mutual aid, and spiritual institutions. They also fostered the growth of commercial establishments that sheltered and supported ethnic communities. The labor of Asian workers also transformed the physical landscape through significant contributions to development, transportation systems, and cultivation with techniques and aesthetic influences from different regions of Asia. As the 20th century progressed, the struggle to create strong, independent nations and the claims of common people to participate in democracy and government fostered the emergence of civic and political associations to advocate

for the interests of ethnic groups in the United States. At the same time, these common people supported the struggle for independence and strong national homelands in Asia to resist the imperial ambitions of U.S., British, French, Russian, and Japanese powers.

Asian immigrants and second- and third-generation Asian Americans struggled to create better lives for themselves, their families, and their communities. They drew together with people within their own networks and with other immigrants and settler communities across the United States. The community organizations, commercial establishments, work practices, and civic and political organizations they created left their marks and presence in the construction of the national landscape. They are part of the dynamic multiplicities in the making of America.

Endnotes

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